

VZCZCXRO6547
OO RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM RUEHNH
DE RUEHGO #0977/01 2771129
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 041129Z OCT 07
FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6626
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0566
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 4099
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 7656
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 5215
RUEHCHI/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 1104
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1000
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 000977

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP/MLS, DRL, AND IO
PACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/03/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [BM](#)
SUBJECT: RAIDS AND ARRESTS CONTINUE IN BURMA

REF: RANGOON 971 AND PREVIOUS

RANGOON 00000977 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: P/E Chief Leslie Hayden for Reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: The Charge d'Affaires has been summoned to Nay Pyi Taw to meet with the Deputy Foreign Minister for a one-on-one meeting about the situation; we learned that the Chinese and Russian Ambassadors had been invited for similar meetings today. Nightly arrests and raids on monasteries continue, although the UN was informed it could collect their employee and her family arrested yesterday evening. We have learned of other releases, but expect nightly raids and arrests to continue as the government gathers more intelligence from interrogations and identifies participants from the pictures it collected during the demonstrations. End summary

Charge d' Affaires Summoned to Nay Pyi Taw

¶2. (C) The Ministry of Foreign Affairs contacted Charge d'Affaires this afternoon to request she travel to Nay Pyi Taw tomorrow to meet with Deputy Foreign Minister Maung Myint for a one-on-one discussion about the current situation. We have learned the Russian and Chinese Ambassadors were in Nay Pyi Taw today, also for meetings with Maung Myint. The Charge has requested a meeting with the Chinese Ambassador this evening for a readout on his meeting with the Deputy Foreign Minister.

¶3. (C) Regarding the prominent role of the Chinese Ambassador in Gambari's visit, The Ambassador appears to have acted as a key facilitator of the visit, lobbying the Burmese government to allow Gambari to stay longer than twenty-four hours in Burma and convincing the government to give Gambari meetings with the senior generals. The UN remains mum on the results of Gambari's meetings here. Pol/econ chief met today with the Counselor from the Swiss Embassy, who expressed frustration at the UN's unwillingness to share information on the visit.

Anatomy of a Monastery Raid

14. (C) The military reportedly continued arrests and raids of monasteries today. Two monasteries in South Oakkalapa Township were reportedly raided today after the monks had finished their lunch. Details of some of the nighttime monastery raids last week are slowly beginning to emerge. Foreign journalists operating in Burma told Poloff they have spoken with several witnesses who have provided them with additional details on September 27th's early-morning raid on the Ngwe Kyar Yan Monastery in Rangoon. These sources reported that at approximately 0200 on September 27, security forces forcibly entered the monastery, beating monks and destroying property with riot control munitions and bamboo and rattan batons. Approximately 70 monks were taken away according to local residents and monastery officials. Members of the monastery also reported that cash, jewelry, and other valuables were missing following the raid.

15. (C) Witnesses reported that later that morning a senior official from Burma's Religious Affairs Department visited the Ngwe Kyar Yan to ask the senior abbot to relocate to Kaba Aya Pagoda and order the remaining monks to clean the evidence of the raid. When the abbot and monks refused, the official departed and security forces returned along with members of the Swan Ahr Shin, the plain-clothes militia associated with USDA. This time however, local residents reportedly surrounded the monastery preventing security personnel outside from entering and those inside from leaving. Eventually reinforcements arrived and forcibly dispersed the crowd at approximately 1800, according to witnesses. Local residents reported two young men were shot and killed by soldiers, including 18 year old Zayar Naing Oo. Similar incidents were reported at other local monasteries, including Kyaik Ka San, where security forces reportedly shot dead two people and beat another to death when he mistakenly

RANGOON 00000977 002.2 OF 002

beeped his car horn near soldiers.

16. (C) We have been unable to confirm reports of continuing demonstrations by monks in Rakhine State. We have heard many such reports that have turned out to be highly exaggerated or false. Rangoon monasteries hosting monks from Rakhine State were major targets of the regime's raids since Rakhine monks were active in the demonstrations. Many of these Rangoon monasteries are completely empty. Additionally, The regime is pressuring the heads of monasteries across Burma to send all monks studying Buddhist literature home. Only monks managing the monasteries and their deputies are being allowed to stay. The Sin Phyu Monastery in Mawlamyaing Township, where nearly six hundred students were studying, is now reportedly empty.

UN Employee, Journalist Freed

17. (C) UNDP Deputy Director Sanaka Samarasingha told us today the government informed him this afternoon that the UN could collect their employee arrested yesterday evening, who was being held at the Kayaikasan Race Course, and also her family members, who were being detained at the Government Technical Institute (GTI). The UNDP employee had been rounded up with several others when the military raided businesses and homes near the eastern entrance to Shwe Dagon Pagoda, which had been a gathering place for demonstrators and activists (reftel). Samarasingha asked us not to publicly discuss news of their impending release until it was confirmed. He said he would contact us as soon as this happens and to brief us, to the extent possible, about their physical condition and experience in custody.

18. (C) Pol/econ chief met today with Min Zaw, correspondent for The Tokyo Shimbun, who was detained by Special Branch Police September 28, when they came to his house at 2:00 a.m. Min Zaw is married to local AP correspondent Aye Aye Win and

both have been close and helpful sources for emboffs. Min Zaw told us he was interrogated regarding the presence of his Japanese Bureau chief in Burma, and whether or not his employer was transmitting pictures of the recent demonstrations. Min Zaw said he was held at the Rangoon headquarters of the Ministry of Home Affairs. He was not tortured and received medication for his diabetes. Min Zaw told his interrogators he had properly obtained a journalist visa for his bureau chief through the Ministry of Information and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He said that during his five-day detention his guards told him the "top brass" were furious over the pictures of the demonstrations and the crackdown that had leaked to the international media.

¶9. (C) Min Zaw said the authorities lacked a fundamental understanding of how easy it is for digital pictures to be transmitted over the internet and distributed throughout the world, but are beginning to understand now. Min Zaw was an up-close witness to the September 28 military attack on peaceful demonstrators and told us he saw soldiers shooting directly into the crowd, not firing warning shots as they claimed. Min Zaw dismissed rumors of a split between the senior generals saying the top members of the SPDC were like a family that may fight amongst themselves, but circle the wagons when under fire.

Comment:

¶10. (C) We have received reports of other releases, but expect nightly raids and arrests to continue as the government gathers more intelligence from interrogations and identifies participants from the pictures it collected during the demonstrations. The regime's actions against the monasteries indicate the generals are pursuing the same tactics used against the universities after the 1988 uprising - they are dismantling the entire educational system of the clergy. End comment.

VILLAROSA